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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the decision-making strategies which have been incorporated in the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments in Georgia and the Assessments of Performance in Teaching developed for use in South Carolina. Although both instruments are designed for use with beginning teachers, the decision-making structure of these two instruments is quite different. To a great extent these differences reflect practical concerns in the way that the assessment process is administered in the two states. Yet, the differences also reflect different assumptions about the possible uses of the assessment data for staff development. The writer highlights the rationale for the decision-making procedures in view of the purpose and practicalities of the two situations. (Author)

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A Comparison of Decision-making Frameworks of Two State Level Teacher Assessment/Observation Systems

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A Comparison of Decision-making Frameworks of Two State Level Teacher Assessment/Observation Systems

Introduction

In recent years an increased amount of energy has been directed toward state programs requiring a systematic on-the-job assessment of teaching. Under the pressure for accountability in many states, legislatures and state boards have moved beyond the requirement of college degrees and written competency examinations for teacher certification and contract eligibility to include standards for classroom performance. Performance assessments have been primarily for teacher selection and teacher development in those states which have mandated or implemented such requirements. These two functions of classroom observation for teacher selection and development are encompassed by the teacher assessment programs in Georgia and South Carolina.

Classroom observation instruments designed to measure minimal teaching competencies have been developed in the two states as part of these assessment programs. While reliable and valid instruments and training programs for observers are critical components of these observational systems, the decision-making strategies are also vitally important, since the decisions made will determine a teacher's eligibility for future professional employment. These strategies include methods of aggregating data and determining passing scores.

Although the instruments used in both states are designed for use with beginning teachers, the decision-making structures are quite different. To a great extent these differences reflect practical concerns in the administration of the assessment process. Of specific interest in this paper are the decision-making procedures of the two

evaluation systems, as they relate to the purpose and practicalities of the respective evaluation programs.

Purpose of the Teacher Assessment Programs

Both the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI) in Georgia and the Assessments of Performance in Teaching (APT) in South Carolina are designed to provide observational data for evaluation and staff development of beginning teachers in any grade or subject area. Neither of these instruments is intended to represent an exhaustive list of teaching behaviors. Nor is either intended to identify master teachers. Rather, they represent a set of fundamental teaching skills which are related to effective teaching and which are considered essential for beginning teachers. Since both assessment programs allow teachers repeated opportunities to achieve an acceptable performance, the assumption can be made that failure to demonstrate the teaching behaviors at the minimum levels required would indicate severe deficiencies.

While the identification of staff development needs is common to both instruments, the evaluation purpose is ostensibly different in the two states. Demonstration of the competencies on the TPAI is required in Georgia for a teacher to be issued a renewable certificate. In South Carolina the APT results are used to determine eligibility of teachers for continued employment. Successful completion of an APT evaluation in South Carolina enables a teacher to move from a provisional contract to an annual contract. In addition to effectively licensing teachers based on the demonstration of essential competencies, both states require that assistance be provided to teachers based on assessment results. The Georgia program allows a maximum

of three years during which beginning teachers are assessed, assisted, and then assessed again if they do not meet minimum standards the first time. With three observations in the fall followed by any necessary staff development and then three more observations in the spring, a total of 6 assessments (6 sets of 3 observations) could occur over a three-year period.

In South Carolina, the maximum time the state allows teachers to teach without having met the minimum standards is two years. However, a teacher who has not met the APT requirements at the end of the second year, may have one more opportunity for a provisional contract if he or she can successfully complete six units of course work. The guidelines in both state programs require that teachers be given specific feedback on strengths and weaknesses identified during the assessments. The school districts are responsible for providing opportunities for staff development based on these identified needs.

Administration of the Teacher Assessment Programs

Development of the Georgia Performance-Based Certification Program began in 1975 as a result of a state board policy. The TPAI, the training program for observers, and the guidelines for administrative procedures were developed in Georgia from 1977 through 1980. In 1980 use of the program for certification decisions began. The assessment procedures are coordinated by a statewide network of regional assessment centers. The data collectors and coordinators at the assessment centers are responsible for the training of observers, the orientation of beginning teachers, the scheduling of interviews and observations, and the return and interpretation of data.

The South Carolina teacher assessment program resulted from legislation passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1979. As part of the program to improve standards for education in the state, the legislation requires that beginning teachers be assessed by trained observers using a statewide instrument for measuring minimum competency in the classroom. Full implementation of the assessment process including contractual decisions will begin during the 1983-84 school year. Unlike the Georgia system, the management system for training observers and the collection of observational data does not involve a network of state employees. In fact the law requires that observers be representatives of the school districts. Without a network of state employees to handle the training, the training is accomplished in a three-stage process. A group of part-time state trainers first train the field coordinators who represent the school districts and institutions in regional sessions. Then these field coordinators will, in turn, conduct training sessions at the local level.

Beginning teachers in both programs are observed on at least three occasions by trained observers. The data sources for the two assessment programs are similar. While South Carolina recommends three observers in the categories of administrator, peer, and principal, Georgia requires an external data collector from outside the school district in addition to a peer observer and an administrator. Data collectors in both Georgia and South Carolina examine lesson plans and observe classroom practices. In Georgia, however, the observers also assess items based on responses to a standardized interview. (For additional information on the Georgia teacher assessment program see Ellett, Capie, & Johnson, 1980. The South Carolina teacher assessment program is explained more fully in Stulac, Stone, Woods, & Worthy, 1982).

Although the assessment process is administered differently in the two states, every effort is made in both programs to assure a fair opportunity for teachers to meet the minimum standards on the assessment instruments. Some of the safeguards built into the procedures to ensure fair and accurate assessments are listed below.

1. Teachers receive an orientation which provides an overview of all expectations of the assessment process.
2. Teachers select the lessons they wish to present for their observations.
3. Minimum scores are based on at least three separate observations.
4. Observations lasting a full period or 30 to 60 minutes are required.
5. Assistance and additional observations are provided if minimum standards are not met during the first three observations.
6. Observers must pass a training program.

Assessment Instruments

Both the TPAI and the APT were developed by the selection of essential competencies which were later collapsed with or subsumed under other competencies in the set. Statewide surveys of educators identified teaching skills that minimally competent beginning teachers should possess. These teaching behaviors became the starting point for the development of each of the instruments.

In South Carolina's APT Instrument, five major categories were derived from the competencies identified as essential in the statewide survey. These five categories, known as Performance Dimensions (PD's), measure teaching behaviors in the areas of Planning, Instruction,

Management, Communication, and Attitude. Each PD is described by 8 to 11 teaching skills referred to as observation statements. The number of observation statements associated with each category is shown in Figure 1. Despite the fact that a total instrument decision is made

Figure 1 about here

from a composite of three observations, the category and subcategory structure has been retained to provide more precise, thus more meaningful information for staff development. After observing teachers and reviewing their daily lesson plans, observers make dichotomous decisions about and record evidence for each of the 51 observation statements (see Appendix A for the APT Observation Sheet). The final evaluative data represents a composite score based on these 51 observation statements averaged across three occasions.

In Georgia the final set of competencies selected for certification decisions includes 14 competency statements rather than 5 PD's. Each competency is described by from two to five indicators (see Appendix B for the Competencies and Indicators in the T?AI). A five-point scoring system is used for each indicator. Behaviors which describe the scoring system at this lowest level are referred to as descriptors. Two types of descriptors are used by observers to record the demonstration of teaching skills. One type is a Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) containing a set of five descriptors from which the observer selects the level of performance exhibited by the teacher. The other type of descriptors represents a checklist of four items. In the latter case observers record whether or not each of the four descriptors was demonstrated, and the number of behaviors demonstrated determines the

scores for the indicator. If none of the checklist items is demonstrated, the score is one; if one is demonstrated, the score is two, and so on. An example of two indicators with two types of descriptors can be seen in Appendix C.

Decision-making Strategies

There is quite a difference in the way the data are aggregated for decisions based on the two instruments. Beginning teachers in Georgia must attain a minimum level on each of the 14 competencies. In contrast, the method of scoring recommended by South Carolina involves a single standard based on the entire APT Instrument. Both technical and practical considerations have produced differences in the decision-making strategies.

The South Carolina decision to use a total instrument score is based on statistical evidence as well as on logical factors. For example, a strong consideration in the recommendation for a composite score was the fact that greater internal consistency and interrater agreement was achieved with the total instrument than with each Performance Dimension. Also from a technical standpoint, the decision to use a single score on the APT is supported by analyses of data from the statewide field tests which indicated a unidimensional scale (Ryan & Stone, 1980). Recognizing the possibilities of a teacher's "passing" with a poor performance in a major category, researchers in South Carolina examined the relationship between low scores in each Performance Dimension and total instrument score. These studies revealed that few teachers who met the minimum standard performed poorly on any single Performance Dimension (Report to the Teacher Recruitment, Training, and Certification Committee, 1983).

From a practical perspective, setting of the standard and the cut-off score seemed to place greater emphasis on minimizing false positives than on minimizing false negatives. The initial standard set by committee judgement was an average of 42 out of 51 items over 3 occasions or a total of 126 out of 153 for the 3 required observations. However, the final recommendation of the South Carolina Department of Education and the State Board of Education is a cut-off score of 132 out of 153 over 3 occasions. The higher score increases the confidence that a teacher's true score meets or exceeds the minimum level--that a teacher who meets the criterion actually should have "passed" but did not do so just because of random error. By moving the cut-off upward from the standard set by the committee, South Carolina has decreased the chances of false positives and increased the chances of false negatives. With the higher score, random error could result in more teachers not passing when their true score was at or above the minimum level. The concern for false denials is offset by the rationale that teachers have additional opportunities to be assessed and that they have fair and reasonable opportunities to demonstrate acceptable performances.

The high cut-off score may also counterbalance the effect produced from the use of a total instrument score. The aggregation of data at the lowest level over three occasions provides the teacher a great deal of flexibility. For example, a teacher could reach the cut-off even though as many as 21 of the 51 specific behaviors on the APT were not demonstrated during one of the three observed lessons. Or, a teacher could be very weak in a single area such as instruction on three different occasions and still pass. While the pooling of three

observations and the aggregation of all data allow room for these weaknesses, the higher score increases the number of skills a teacher must demonstrate in order to pass. A summary of the APT decisions system is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 about here

There is both statistical and logical support for the certification decisions in Georgia based on mastery of 14 competencies. Required minimum levels on each of the 14 competencies ensure the demonstration of different teaching skills. This distributed weighting of skills ensures that teachers who pass all 14 competencies possess capabilities in each competency area. In contrast to the South Carolina situation, the Georgia decision strategies have an emphasis on standards and sampling of behaviors at lower levels and on minimizing false negatives.

There are actually two levels of standard setting in the TrAI. Figure 3 depicts the decision levels for a competency with three indicators, each of which has a checklist of 4 descriptors. Sampling of behaviors occurs first at the descriptor level where a minimum score

Figure 3 about here

must be attained for credit on an indicator. The number of descriptors required for each indicator was set by expert opinion surveys. The minimum level for each indicator in the competency shown in Figure 3 is four. This means that at least 3 of the 4 descriptors must be demonstrated for credit to be given for that indicator. Although the descriptors for each indicator have a five-point range, the minimum

levels for each indicator translate the one to five score into a pass/fail decision. Any score at or above the minimum level would yield a passing score for the indicator. That is, a teacher receives credit for an indicator for which the minimum is three if the teacher's score is three, four, or five. The margin for error at this level in the example given in Figure 3 would be represented by the total number of descriptors required for this competency, 3 in each square or a total of 54, compared to the total number of descriptors possible, 4 in each square or 72.

The next level of standard setting involves the number of indicators necessary for mastery of a competency. The standard in Georgia is actually 100% of all indicators for each competency during two assessments comprised of 6 observations. However, to allow for error and to reduce the possibility of false denials, the score was adjusted downward. A cut-off score was set at 75% for each competency. A teacher, therefore, may receive credit for a competency by having at least 75% of the indicator scores at or above the minimum levels. Figure 4 gives an example of fall and spring scores for a competency with 4 indicators. The total number of opportunities a teacher has to meet or exceed the

Figure 4 about here

minimum level is the product of the number of indicators and the number of occasions or 24 for this competency. The percentage of passing scores marked with an asterisk is less than 75%; therefore, the teacher would not receive credit for this competency. Each of the squares in Figure 3 also represents the sampling of the indicators in a competency.

At least 75% of the indicators or 14 out of 18 must meet the minimum level for the teacher to meet the cut-off for the competency.

Report of Data for Staff Development Purposes

Despite the fact that data from the two instruments are aggregated quite differently for the certification and contractual decisions, both programs record and report data for staff development purposes. The specificity of information given to the beginning teachers varies somewhat in the two state programs. Information on performance for the three occasions is provided at the competency and the indicator levels to teachers in Georgia assessed with the TPAI. Teachers in South Carolina receive a summary of their performance on the three occasions for each Performance Dimension and each observation statement. Although pass/fail information at the competency level for the TPAI and at the total instrument level for the APT would suffice for certification and contractual decisions, more specific information is needed for teacher development. Summaries of these data at the district and school levels can be used to assess needs of groups of teachers.

Summary and Discussion

In summary, the Georgia program is more rigorous in that data are aggregated in 14 separate categories for certification decisions. But since minimum levels are set at both the indicator and the descriptor levels, the sampling of behaviors allows for random error. The lowering of the cut-off score for mastery of each competency decreases the chances of false denials. Greater flexibility for the teacher is allowed by the total score used in the South Carolina program. But while the sampling of behavior is not restricted to specific areas as in the Georgia program, the cut-off score requires a demonstration of a greater

percentage of teaching skills. Consequently, the reduction of error is in the opposite direction with a decrease in the chance of false positives.

Another implication of the two decision models drawn from practical application has to do with the length of time a teacher has to meet the minimum levels. Though teachers in South Carolina who fail to pass the APT may eventually earn an opportunity for a third provisional year, they are not employable in the state after two unsuccessful provisional years without meeting additional course requirements. While the Georgia program allows less latitude in the variety of teaching behaviors required, the Georgia program is less stringent than South Carolina's in that teachers may have three consecutive years of assessments before they are no longer certifiable.

The operational system in South Carolina fits the support system available to administer the program. Of necessity the APT Instrument as well as the decision strategies are not as complex as those in Georgia. Full time employees are available at regional assessment centers in Georgia to train observers, interpret data, and guide the program. The field administration of the program in South Carolina relies on representation from local school districts. Therefore, the implementation is enhanced by a less complex system.

Finally, the report of data for use in guiding staff development is similar in the two programs. However, the feedback in the South Carolina program may be less likely to facilitate change in teacher behavior because of the global nature of the score. Instead of focusing on the demonstration of skills in a defined competency area or Performance Dimension, teachers in South Carolina must focus each time on the entire

instrument. In Gerogia teachers are allowed to "bank" competencies and therefore, specific feedback is more likely to facilitate change in a deficient area. The other side of this coin is that after some competencies are "banked," teachers do not have to show that they are capable of meeting minimum levels on all of the essential competencies simultaneously during a set of assessments.

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Performance Dimensions	Number of Observation Statements
1. Planning	8
2. Instruction	11
3. Management	11
4. Communication	11
5. Attitude	10

Note. Total items = 51.

Figure 1. Number of Observation Statements in APT Performance Dimensions.

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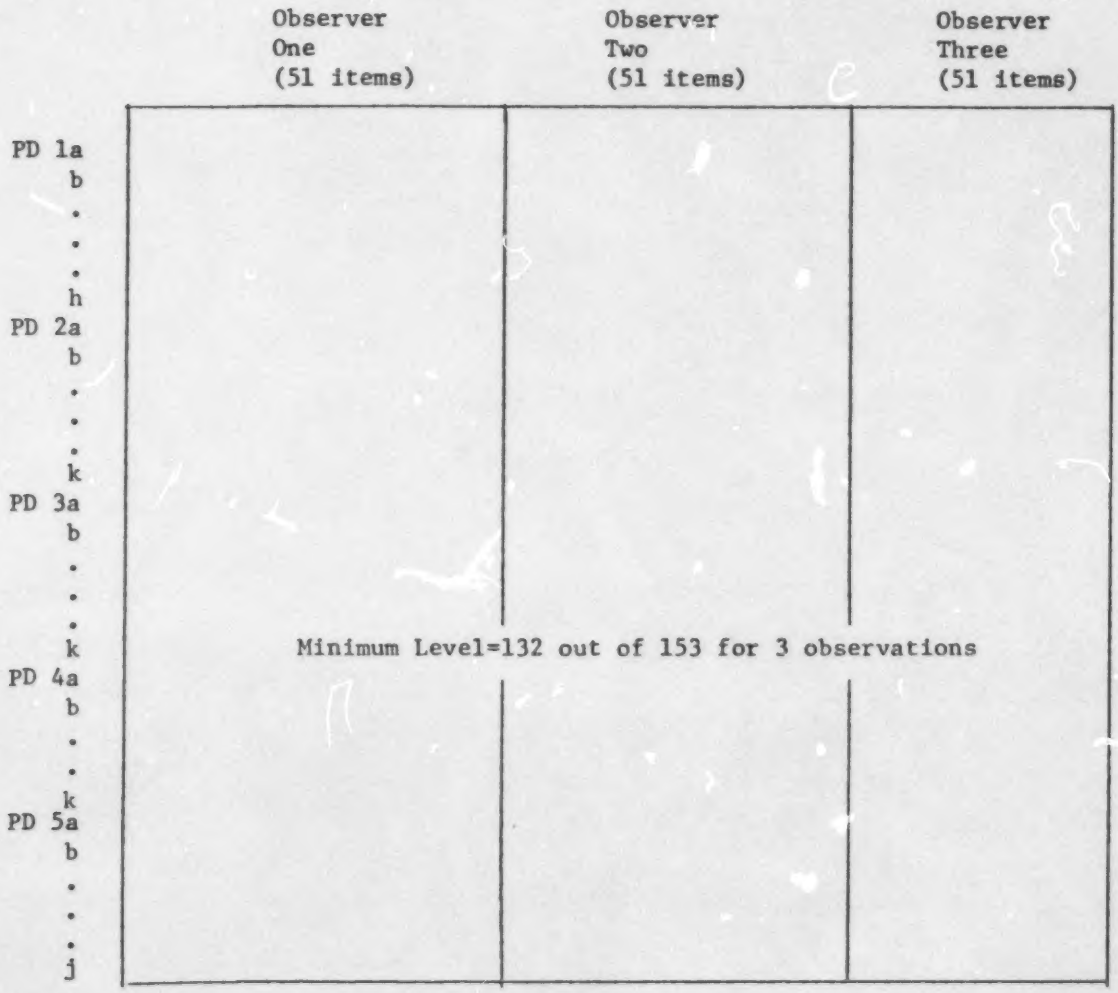

Figure 2. South Carolina System for Making Contractual Decisions Based on Total APT Instrument Score

	Assessment One			Assessment Two		
	Obs. One	Obs. Two	Obs. Three	Obs. One	Obs. Two	Obs. Three
Indicator 1	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4
2	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4		
3	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4	3 of 4		

Note. Minimum Level for each indicator in the example=3 out of 4 descriptors. Minimum Level for Each Competency=75% of indicator scores which meet or exceed minimum level.

Figure 3. Example of One Competency in the Georgia System for Making Certification Decisions on 14 TPAI Competencies.

Indicators	Minimum Level	Fall Scores (3 observers)	Spring Scores (3 observers)
1	3	5* 4* 4*	5* 4* 5*
2	3	3* 2 3*	3* 3* 4*
3	4	3 4* 4*	4* 3 3
4	4	3 3 3	4* 5* 4*

*Score meets or exceeds the minimum level.

Note. 17 out of 24 scores, (less than 75% of the scores), meet or exceed the minimum level.

Figure 4. Example of Fall and Spring Scores on a TPAI Competency.

Appendix A

APT Observation Sheet Used in South Carolina

APT OBSERVATION SHEET

Evaluation Completed by: (Check one and complete all sections of form.)
☐ 1. Observer
☐ 2. Teacher Self-Observation

Directions: Use leading zero's for coding single digit numbers. For example code "2" as "02."

Teacher Observed

(Last Name) (First Name) (MI) Social Security No.

Observer

(Last Name) (First Name) (MI) Social Security No.

Demonstration Lesson

Observation Date: Mo. Day Year

Actual Starting Time:

Actual Ending Time:

Class Size Observed:

Subject Area Observed: _____

Grade Level(s) Observed: (Code as many grade levels as in class observed. Use "K" for Kindergarten.)

Scores

PD1: PD2: PD3: PD4: PD5: TOTAL:

Directions: Use the *Assessments of Performance in Teaching: Observation Instrument* (APT Instrument) to complete this sheet. After reading the Planning Sheet and examining records (for PD 1) or observing the teaching demonstration (for PD 2-5), write brief statement of evidence or lack of evidence after each observation. Then circle the letter in the column on the right if the skill or behavior was demonstrated or place an X over the letter if evidence did not support the demonstration. All observations must be scored. Write the total number of observation statements demonstrated for each Performance Dimension (PD) in the blanks above.

Observation	Evidence	Demonstration

PD 1: PLANNING

a. outcomes stated		a.
b. objectives compatible		b.
c. procedures stated		c.
d. students involved		d.
e. materials stated		e.
f. differences planned		f.
g. objectives assessed		g.
h. progress recorded		h.

PD 2: INSTRUCTION

a. began promptly	a.
b. objectives addressed	b.
c. needs accommodated	c.
d. interest stimulated	d.
e. approaches varied	e.
f. size varied	f.
g. active opportunities	g.
h. application opportunities	h.
i. information obtained	i.
j. progress provided	j.
k. physical arrangement	k.

PD 3: MANAGEMENT

a. behavior established	a.
b. firm enforcement	b.
c. procedural confidence	c.
d. instruction continued	d.

PD 3: continued

a. disruptions addressed	a.
f. codes enforced	f.
g. inattentive involved	g.
h. special assistance	h.
i. strategies adjusted	i.
j. patient, poised	j.
k. fair, impartial	k.

PD 4: COMMUNICATION

a. instructional plan	a.
b. logical sequence	b.
c. understandable level	c.
d. explanations restated	d.
e. illustrations demonstrated	e.
f. knowledgeable authority	f.
g. information accurate	g.
h. legible writing	h.

i. written communication	i.
j. oral communication	j.
k. speech quality	k.

PD 5: ATTITUDE

a. courtesy modeled	a.
b. positive reinforcement	b.
c. expression encouraged	c.
d. learning personalized	d.
e. supportive corrections	e.
f. reasons given	f.
g. value communicated	g.
h. enthusiasm communicated	h.
i. open-mindedness	i.
j. humor acknowledged	j.

Appendix B

Competencies and Indicators in the TPAI Used in Georgia

Competencies and Indicators in the TPAI

PLANS INSTRUCTION TO ACHIEVE SELECTED OBJECTIVES.

1. Specifies or selects learner objectives for lessons.
2. Specifies or selects teaching procedures for lessons.
3. Specifies or selects content, materials, and media for lessons.
4. Specifies or selects materials and procedures for assessing learner progress on the objectives.
5. Plans instruction at a variety of levels.

ORGANIZES INSTRUCTION TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AMONG LEARNERS.

6. Organizes instruction to take into account differences among learners in their capabilities.
7. Organizes instruction to take into account differences among learners in their learning styles.
8. Organizes instruction to take into account differences among learners in their rates of learning.

OBTAINS AND USES INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEEDS AND PROGRESS OF INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS.

9. Uses teacher-made or teacher-selected evaluation materials or procedures to obtain information about learner progress.
10. Communicates with individual learners about their needs and progress.

REFERS LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL PROBLEMS TO SPECIALISTS.

11. Obtains and uses information about learners from cumulative records.
12. Identifies learners who require the assistance of specialists.
13. Obtains and uses information from co-workers and parents to assist with specific learner problems.

OBTAINS AND USES INFORMATION ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTION TO REVISE IT WHEN NECESSARY.

14. Obtains information on the effectiveness of instruction.
15. Revises instruction as needed using evaluation results and observation data.

USES INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES, METHODS, AND MEDIA RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES.

1. Uses teaching methods appropriate for objectives, learners and environment.
2. Uses instructional equipment and other instructional aids.
3. Uses instructional materials that provide learners with appropriate practice on objectives.

COMMUNICATES WITH LEARNERS.

4. Gives directions and explanations related to lesson content.
5. Clarifies directions and explanations when learners misunderstand lesson content.
6. Uses responses and questions from learners in teaching.
7. Provides feedback to learners throughout the lesson.
8. Uses acceptable written and oral expression with learners.

DEMONSTRATES A REPERTOIRE OF TEACHING METHODS.

9. Implements learning activities in a logical sequence.
10. Demonstrates ability to conduct lessons using a variety of teaching methods.
11. Demonstrates ability to work with individuals, small groups, and large groups.

REINFORCES AND ENCOURAGES LEARNER INVOLVEMENT IN INSTRUCTION.

12. Uses procedures which get learners initially involved in lessons.
13. Provides learners with opportunities for participating.
14. Maintains learner involvement in lessons.
15. Reinforces and encourages the efforts of learners to maintain involvement.

DEMONSTRATES AN UNDERSTNADING OF THE SCHOOL SUBJECT BEING TAUGHT.

16. Helps learners recognize the purpose and importance of topics or activities.
17. Demonstrates knowledge in the subject area.

ORGANIZES TIME, SPACE, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT FOR INSTRUCTION.

18. Attends to routine tasks.
19. Uses instructional time effectively.
20. Provides a learning environment that is attractive and orderly.

DEMONSTRATES ENTHUSIASM FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AND THE SUBJECT BEING TAUGHT.

1. Communicates personal enthusiasm.
2. Stimulates learner interest.
3. Conveys the impression of knowing what to do and how to do it.

HELPS LEARNERS DEVELOP POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPTS.

4. Demonstrates warmth and friendliness.
5. Demonstrates sensitivity to the needs and feelings of learners.
6. Demonstrates patience, empathy and understanding.

MANAGES CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS.

7. Provides feedback to learners about their behavior.
8. Promotes comfortable interpersonal relationships.
9. Maintains appropriate classroom behavior.
10. Manages disruptive behavior among learners.

Appendix C

Examples of Two Types of Descriptors on the TPAI Used in Georgia

Examples of Two Types of Descriptors on the TPAI

(Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale)

Competency: Communicates with Learners.

Indicator 7. Provides feedback to learners throughout the lesson.

Descriptors

1. Accepts learner comments or performance without feedback about their adequacy.
2. Responds to negative aspects of student work, but few comments are made about positive aspects.
3. Informs students of the adequacy of their performance. Few errors pass by without being addressed.
4. Helps learners evaluate the adequacy of their own performance.
5. In addition to 4, the teacher probes for the source of misunderstandings which arise.

(Checklist)

Competency: Manages Classroom Interactions.

Indicator 7. Provides feedback to learners about their behavior.

Ratings	Descriptors
1. None of the descriptors is evident.	a. Makes expectations about behavior clear to learners.
2. One of the descriptors is evident.	b. Provides verbal feedback for acceptable or unacceptable behavior.
3. Two of the descriptors are evident.	c. Provides nonverbal feedback (smiles, frowns, nods, moves closer to student, etc.) for acceptable or unacceptable behavior.
4. Three of the descriptors are evident.	d. Uses language free of derogatory references when talking to learners.
5. Four of the descriptors are evident.	

Abstract

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This paper compares the decision-making strategies which have been incorporated in the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI) in Georgia and the Assessments of Performance in Teaching (APT) developed for use in South Carolina. Although both instruments are designed for use with beginning reachers, the decision-making structure of these two instruments is quite different. To a great extent these differences reflect practical concerns in the way that the assessment process is administered in the two states. Yet, the differences also reflect different assumptions about the possible uses of the assessment data for staff development. The writer highlights the rationale for the decision-making procedures in view of the purpose and practicalities of the two situations.